methods which it was claimed differed from those to which we were committed by the Paris Conference of November. Nivelle had been Commander-in-Chief for only just a fortnight. The ink was scarcely dry on his new Victory March when the Conference met.

The first I heard of the change in plans was on the evening preceding the Conference. I was then put in possession of its general outline. It was Christmas Day. What a day to be devoted by a British Cabinet to the consideration of a plan by which 2,000,000 young men drawn from three Christian nations were to rend and tear each other to pieces! But war knows no sanctities. The barbaric expedient of war which did not spare the stately cathedrals of France and Flanders, and massacres the innocents by bombs in a hundred Bethlehems, would not hesitate about spending a Christmas Festival on schemes of triumphant slaughter. No one gave a thought to the pacific tradition of the day. To quote Burns about another transgression, war " hardens all within and petrifies the feelings."

My first news of plan

It appeared that the new plan had been communicated to Sir Douglas Haig on 21st December, 1916, in the following letter, where its leading features are explained with truly French lucidity :—

" My dear General,

Following on our conversation of 20th December, I have the honour to set out

for you
as follows my views on the subject of
Nivelle's letter our offensive in 1917,
and on the
to Haig modifications which I
think it indis-
pensable to introduce into the original
plan of these operations.